



**YOUTH FOR
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**
citizens of today and tomorrow



CLIMATE AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

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Introduction

India, like much of the world, is living through a period of deep climate uncertainty. Heatwaves, sudden floods, long dry spells, cyclones and unusual weather patterns have become part of our daily conversations. Yet, the sense remains that our collective response is not matching the scale of the crisis. Odisha, in particular, sits at the frontline—facing repeated cyclones, rising temperatures, coastal erosion, shrinking water sources and increasing pressure on small farmers, fishers and forest-dependent communities. For families already living with poverty and weak safety nets, climate shocks arrive more frequently and hit much harder.

At Youth for Social Development (YSD), we begin with two simple but important truths. First, the climate is not changing by itself—human actions, unsustainable production systems and unchecked consumption are driving this crisis. Second, climate impacts are not felt equally.

The poorest households, women, children, smallholders and marginalised communities carry the heaviest burden while being the least equipped to respond. This inequality is sharply visible in Odisha, where climate exposure and social vulnerability intersect every day.

These realities guide our work and our commitment to a Just Transition—a shift toward low-carbon and climate-resilient development that does not leave behind the very people who are most affected. For us, Just Transition means securing livelihoods, restoring ecosystems, strengthening community institutions and ensuring that climate solutions are fair, inclusive and people-led.

Our strategy is rooted in this belief: climate action must centre justice, dignity and resilience, and meaningful change must start with empowering communities to protect both their environment and their future.



Problem Statement

a. Heatwaves and Rising Temperature

Extremes : Odisha is experiencing more intense heatwaves, affecting health, daily work and incomes—especially for outdoor labourers. Children, the elderly and low-income families suffer the most in poorly ventilated homes. Heat stress reduces productivity and increases health risks during peak summer months.

b. Recurrent and Intensifying Droughts

Western and interior : Odisha face frequent droughts that hit rainfed farming hard. With only about one-third of farmland irrigated, small farmers rely heavily on the monsoon and often suffer crop loss. This reduces food security, weakens livelihoods, and pushes families into distress migration.

c. Groundwater Depletion and Quality

Stress : Groundwater levels in many parts of Odisha fluctuate sharply, and some areas face contamination from nitrates, fluoride and industrial pollutants. This affects drinking water safety and reduces

the backup farmers depend on during dry spells. As water becomes scarce or unsafe, competition between agriculture and households grows.

d. Coastal Erosion and Habitat Loss :

Large stretches of Odisha's shoreline are eroding, pushed by sea-level rise, cyclones and storm surges. This leads to saltwater intrusion, loss of farmland and higher risk of flooding for coastal villages. Changing coastlines also threaten nesting beaches of species like the Olive Ridley turtle.

e. Coastal Fisheries Decline :

Small-scale fishers along Odisha's coast are seeing falling catches due to mechanised trawling, habitat loss and changing fish patterns. Traditional fishing grounds are shrinking, and income insecurity is rising. Without stronger co-management and support during lean seasons, coastal livelihoods remain highly vulnerable.



f. Loss of Forest Buffers After Cyclones : Cyclones often destroy forests, mangroves and shelterbelt plantations that protect villages from storms and erosion. Although restoration efforts exist, recovery is slow and communities lose valuable ecosystem services like soil protection and fuelwood. Rebuilding these green buffers is key to safer and more resilient settlements.

g. Waste, Pollution and Degraded Coastal Commons : Plastic waste, municipal dumps and polluted rivers are damaging coastal ecosystems and reducing their ability to protect communities. Mangroves, dunes and

mudflats lose vitality when waste accumulates. Community-led clean-ups and better waste systems can restore these natural buffers and support local livelihoods.

h. Social Vulnerability and Limited Adaptive Capacity (cross-cutting) Poverty, landlessness and exclusion make many communities more exposed to climate risks. Repeated shocks drain savings, push families into migration and widen inequalities. Strengthening local institutions, diversifying livelihoods and improving social protection can help vulnerable groups prepare for and recover from disasters.



Strategic Objective

Youth for Social Development (YSD) works to strengthen community resilience, promote sustainable development, and ensure that climate action is inclusive, equitable, and grounded in environmental justice. Our strategic objectives focus on empowering vulnerable communities especially children, youth, women, indigenous groups, small farmers, and coastal populations to navigate climate risks while advancing development that respects both people and nature.

a. Strengthen Community Capacity for Climate Adaptation and Resilience : We help communities understand climate risks, plan ahead, and adopt practices that reduce vulnerability, while supporting youth and local institutions to lead resilience efforts.

b. Promote Sustainable Production, Consumption, and Resource Governance : We encourage communities to use resources responsibly through better waste systems, cleaner energy, water conservation and

protection of local forests, wetlands and coastal commons.

c. Advance Risk-Informed Planning and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) : We work with communities and local governments to prepare risk-informed plans, strengthen early-warning and response systems, and ensure disaster support reaches the most vulnerable.

d. Protect and Restore Natural Ecosystems and Biodiversity : We support the restoration of forests, rivers, wetlands, mangroves and coastal habitats, recognising their role in protecting communities and sustaining local livelihoods.

e. Advocate for a Just, Non-Extractive, and Climate-Conscious Development Pathway (Just Transition) : We promote a fair shift to low-carbon and nature-friendly development, ensuring vulnerable communities benefit from clean energy, secure livelihoods and policies that protect people and the environment.



Programme Approach

Our programme approach is rooted in the belief that climate action must strengthen people's lives while protecting the ecosystems they depend on. We focus on communities that are most exposed to climate risks—small farmers, coastal fishers, forest-dependent families, women, youth and children—and support them to build resilience with dignity and local leadership.

We begin by listening to communities and understanding their lived realities. This helps us design interventions that are practical, people-led and rooted in local knowledge. Our teams work closely with village institutions, local governments, women's groups, youth collectives and traditional knowledge holders to ensure every action strengthens the community's agency.

Across our programmes, we promote climate-resilient practices, responsible resource use and protection of shared natural spaces—forests, wetlands, rivers, mangroves and coastal commons. We support communities to adopt

sustainable livelihoods, improve waste and water systems, conserve biodiversity and restore damaged ecosystems.

Risk-informed planning is central to our work. We help villages prepare disaster plans, strengthen early-warning systems and build inclusive response mechanisms so that vulnerable families are not left behind during emergencies.

Our approach is guided by the principles of Just Transition: moving toward a greener, low-carbon pathway without shifting the burden onto those who already face the greatest disadvantage. This means supporting clean energy access, diversified and climate-friendly livelihoods, and fair policies that protect both people and nature.

By combining community leadership, local governance strengthening and ecological restoration, our programmes aim to build resilient villages where people can face climate challenges with confidence and hope.



Key Activities

1. Community Climate Adaptation and Resilience

- Facilitate village-level climate awareness sessions, using local examples and simple tools to help communities understand risks.
- Train youth groups, women's collectives and local leaders on climate-resilient farming, water conservation and early preparedness.
- Support communities to prepare resilience plans that outline practical actions they can take before, during and after climate shocks.

2. Sustainable Production, Consumption and Resource Governance

- Set up decentralised waste systems, including segregation at source, recycling linkages and community clean-up drives.
- Promote clean energy options such as solar lighting, improved cookstoves and energy-efficient community spaces.
- Work with farmers, fishers and forest users to adopt resource-efficient practices—water-saving irrigation, sustainable harvesting, and protection of wetlands and coastal commons.

3. Risk-Informed Planning and Disaster Preparedness

- Help villages prepare and update Village Disaster Management Plans (VDMPs) with special focus on children, elderly and persons with disabilities.
- Strengthen community early-warning systems through mock drills, risk mapping and partnerships with local institutions.
- Build capacities of local government bodies and frontline workers on inclusive disaster response and coordination.



4. Ecosystem Protection and Restoration

- Mobilise communities for restoring degraded forests, wetlands, mangroves, dunes and riverbanks through plantation, clean-ups and natural regeneration methods.
- Promote community monitoring of local ecosystems—tracking water levels, fish catch, soil health and biodiversity changes.
- Work with schools, youth and village groups to create “eco-stewardship” activities such as nature clubs, biodiversity walks and conservation campaigns.

5. Advancing a Just Transition

- Support vulnerable households to diversify into low-carbon, climate-resilient livelihoods such as organic and natural farming, sustainable fisheries, eco-tourism or green enterprises.
- Facilitate community dialogues on fair access to clean energy, equitable resource use and protection of local commons.
- Advocate with local and state institutions to ensure development projects do not harm ecological resources or increase burdens on marginalised groups.

6. Cross-cutting Activities

- Build strong community institutions—women’s groups, youth collectives, and forest/water committees—to anchor long-term change.
- Strengthen Gram Panchayats in planning, budgeting and monitoring development that protects people and ecosystems.
- Promote children and youth leadership through climate clubs, school and college-based campaigns and hands-on environmental learning.



Key Outcomes

1. Communities better prepared for climate risks : Villages are able to understand local climate threats and take timely action. Households adopt climate-resilient practices, and youth and women play an active role in resilience planning.

2. Improved management of natural resources and reduced environmental stress : Communities use water, land, forests and coastal commons more responsibly. Waste is better managed, clean energy use increases, and resource-efficient livelihoods start taking root.

3. Stronger disaster preparedness and safer communities : Village Disaster Management Plans are in place and practiced. Early-warning systems work more effectively, and vulnerable groups receive better support during emergencies.

4. Healthier and restored ecosystems : Mangroves, wetlands, forests, dunes and riverbanks show signs of recovery through community-led restoration. Biodiversity improves, and natural buffers become stronger.

5. Fairer and more inclusive pathways for livelihood transition (Just Transition) : Marginalised communities gain access to cleaner energy, safer livelihoods and improved local governance. Development choices begin to shift away from extractive, high-risk practices.



Impact

1. Resilient and climate-ready communities :

Communities have the knowledge, confidence and systems they need to face heatwaves, cyclones, droughts and other climate shocks without losing their dignity or livelihoods.

2. Stronger local economies with reduced climate vulnerability :

Families shift towards safer, climate-resilient livelihoods, reducing distress migration and improving household stability, especially for women, youth and small farmers.

3. Revived natural ecosystems that protect and sustain life :

Restored forests, mangroves, wetlands and coastal habitats act as natural shields, support biodiversity and strengthen the long-term health of local economies.

4. More equitable and people-centred climate action :

Climate solutions become fairer and more inclusive, ensuring that those who are most affected—poor households, women, children, indigenous groups, fishers and farmers—are not left behind.

5. Communities leading their own path toward a Just Transition :

Local institutions take ownership of climate planning, environmental protection and sustainable development, building a future where development does not come at the cost of people or nature.





About Youth for Social Development (YSD) : Youth for Social Development (YSD) is a development organisation working with the duty bearers and rights holders to enhance the quality of life for both urban and rural underprivileged populations in the state of Odisha, India. Our interventions are primarily in the fields of governance and entitlements, including, health, education, water, sanitation, housing, and climate change. We prioritize the well-being of resource-poor and marginalised communities, with a special emphasis on Dalit and Adivasi populations, as well as children, youth, and women, who form the cornerstone of our initiatives.

Working together to avail basic services, empowering the communities on the margin and nudging the local governments and elected representatives – through research, advocacy and training – constitute the core of our approach.

Vision : We envision a just, equitable and sustainable society where everyone has access to social, economic and democratic rights and the capacity to achieve their full potential and lead a dignified life.

Mission : Our mission is to facilitate a holistic sustainable social and economic development of marginalized communities in urban and rural Odisha through participatory community action and people's empowerment.

Core Values : (a) Social justice and equity, (b) Integrity, transparency and accountability, (c) Participation and cooperation



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